“Lincoln” Questions: John Hancock: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Movie Guide by Miss Subler

1. Why does Lincoln have a party at his house? (His wife is upset that she has to invite the other parties into her home)

2. Who is Robert?

3. When riding in the carriage after the Flag Raising ceremony, Secretary of State, William Henry Seward, tells Lincoln the chances of passing the 13th Amendment are:

4. Why does Seward ask the couple if they support the 13th Amendment? Think: If the war ends first, what will the people want? Is it different than what they want while the war is still going? Why?!

5. Hal Holbrook (Old Man in chair {Conservative Republican}) wants to go to Richmond to talk about peace. Why is Lincoln not fully supportive of this idea?

**Reading for homework…Not to be done during movie! Focus on Movie:**

**INTRODUCTION**

Early in the “Lincoln” movie (Scene 7), President Lincoln provides a lengthy defense of his wartime emancipation policy to his Cabinet when he encounters some objections to the move toward abolition from Secretary of Interior John P. Usher.  Read the following excerpt closely and try to identify Lincoln’s key arguments:

**CLOSE READING ASSIGMENT**

LINCOLN:

I decided that the Constitution gives me war powers, but no one  
knows just exactly what those powers are. Some say they don’t  
exist. I don’t know. I decided I needed them to exist to uphold my  
oath to protect the Constitution, which I decided meant that I could  
take the rebels’ slaves from ‘em as property confiscated in war. That  
might recommend to suspicion that I agree with the rebs that their  
slaves are property in the first place. Of course I don’t, never  
have, I’m glad to see any man free, and if calling a man property, or  
war contraband, does the trick… Why I caught at the opportunity.

Now here’s where it gets truly slippery. I use the law allowing  
for the seizure of property in a war knowing it applies only to the  
property of governments and citizens of belligerent nations.

But the South ain’t a nation, that’s why I can’t negotiate with  
’em. So if in fact the Negroes are property according to law, have I  
the right to take the rebels’ property from ‘em, if I insist  
they’re rebels only, and not citizens of a belligerent country?  
And slipperier still: I maintain it ain’t our actual Southern states in  
rebellion, but only the rebels living in those states, the laws of  
which states remain in force. The laws of which states remain in  
force. That means, that since it’s states’ laws that determine whether  
Negroes can be sold as slaves, as property – the Federal government  
doesn’t have a say in that, least not yet – (a glance at  Seward,  
then:)- then Negroes in those states are slaves, hence property, hence my  
war powers allow me to confiscate ‘em as such. So I confiscated ‘em.  
But if I’m a respecter of states’ laws, how then can I legally free  
‘em with my Proclamation, as I done, unless I’m cancelling states’  
laws? I felt the war demanded it; my oath demanded it; I felt right  
with myself; and I hoped it was legal to do it, I’m hoping still.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

After you have organized an outline or chart of Lincoln’s key arguments in this passage, try to answer the following questions:

1.  In the context of the Civil War, what is the meaning of the following words or phrases:  war powers, confiscation, contraband, and belligerent?  Are there other words in the excerpt that need definition

2.  How does Lincoln describe the process which was leading him to conclude that only a constitutional amendment could truly end slavery in the United States?

3.  Why was the problem of ending slavery during the Civil War so “slippery” as Lincoln describes it?  Were the obstacles that Lincoln is describing here mainly political, legal or social?

6. Why is there a rush to bring the Amendment to the House of Representatives?

7. What is Seward bribing Congressmen with?

8. After Robert returns, Lincoln is told by Hal Halbrook that the Southerns are willing to talk about peace. Why wouldn’t Lincoln be willing to talk to the negotiators?

9. Why is the Secretary of State Seward mad at Lincoln?

10. Analyze Mary Todd Lincoln’s character? What type of woman is she? On what basis to you make your judgment?

11. When the generals are discussing the battle of Fort Fishers, how does Lincoln calm the situation? Do you think he did it on purpose or that is just what he tends to do? Could this method work today? Why or why not?

12. The Democrats begin threatening those members of their party that are willing to vote in favor of the Amendment. What is the Republicans’ response?

13. Why might Lincoln not accept the surrender of the Confederacy?

14. What reason does Lincoln give for pardoning deserters for the Union?

15. Do you think we choose the times into which we are born? Or do we fit the times we are born into?

16. What does Lincoln choose? End the war or free the slaves? How does Lincoln’s thoughts of equality come to play in this?

17. “Are all men created equal?” – This is the question asked to Mr. Stevens. Throughout the entire movie he has been the most outspoken congressmen in favor of equality among the races. He tells the House of Representatives that he des not hold what?:

18. What does Robert feel he “has to do?”

19. Why does Stevens want Coffroth to stay a Democrat?

20. What does Lincoln do to get the Amendment to pass (His tactics and work ethic are what?)?

21. What event was the “first” in the history of the Chamber?

22. Why do the Democrats want to postpone the vote?

23. What was Lincoln’s response to peace commissioners in the city?

24. Mr. Stevens gave the bill to whom?

25. When Lee leaves Appomattox Courthouse, what does Grant and is fellow Union officers do?

26. Describing his experience playing Lincoln, Daniel Day-Lewis said, "I never, ever felt that depth of love for another human being that I never met. And that's, I think, probably the effect that Lincoln has on most people that take the time to discover him... I wish he had stayed [with me] forever." Do you agree with Daniel Day-Lewis? Why?

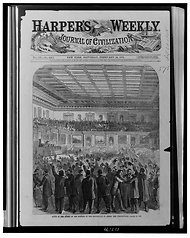
#### LINCOLN

**Overview** | “Lincoln” is a historical drama and biopic, written by [Tony Kushner](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/k/tony_kushner/index.html), directed by [Steven Spielberg](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/steven_spielberg/index.html) and starring Daniel Day-Lewis, that covers the final four months of Abraham Lincoln’s life. The film focuses on the president’s efforts to get the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution passed by the United States House of Representatives. While “Lincoln” received widespread [acclaim from film critics](http://movies.nytimes.com/2012/11/09/movies/lincoln-by-steven-spielberg-stars-daniel-day-lewis.html), some scholars have taken issue with the [way the film presents the 13th Amendment](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/27/opinion/lincolns-use-of-politics-for-noble-ends.html) and the[exclusion of black leaders and voices](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/12/26/what-lincoln-gets-wrong-about-black-leaders-and-the-thirteenth-amendment.html).

**Ways to Approach:**

• **Explore the cult of personality.** Admiration for [Lincoln](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/l/abraham_lincoln/index.html) goes well beyond academic and historian circles. How does “Lincoln” support or refute our modern public perception of the president as a hero? (Consider the nicknames “Honest Abe,” “The Ancient One,” “Emancipator” or “Great Liberator.”)

Why are some leaders more likely than others [to attract public sympathy and support](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/17/weekinreview/17zernike.html), or to go down in history as heroes? How does the on-screen portrayal of historical figures, like [Mr. Day-Lewis’s Lincoln](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/movies/daniel-day-lewis-on-playing-abraham-lincoln.html), influence our understanding of history?

Harper’s Weekly/Library of CongressThe cover of the Feb. 18, 1865 Harper’s Weekly depicted the scene of the passage of the amendment to abolish slavery in the House of Representatives.

• **Investigate “Lincoln” and the 13th Amendment.** The film is focused on Lincoln’s efforts to get the 13th Amendment to the Constitution passed by the House of Representatives to formally end slavery in the United States. Why do [some critics take issue](http://douthat.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/29/spielbergs-lincoln-and-its-critics/) with the way these events (and Lincoln’s perspective on slavery) are depicted? For example, why do you think the filmmakers chose to [omit Lincoln’s association with the abolitionist Frederick Douglass](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/lincoln-where-was-frederick-douglass/2012/11/28/212a4e76-3978-11e2-a263-f0ebffed2f15_blog.html)?

**Related Times and Learning Network Resources:**

* Teaching Resources Collection: [Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War](http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/11/05/resources-abraham-lincoln-and-the-civil-war/)
* Historic Headline: [“House Passes 13th Amendment, Abolishing Slavery”](http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/31/jan-31-1865-house-passes-13th-amendment-abolishing-slavery/)
* 150th Anniversary of Emancipation Proclamation and “Lincoln”-Inspired Op-Eds: [“The Emancipation of Lincoln”](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/opinion/the-emancipation-of-abe-lincoln.html) and [“How Many Slaves Work for You?”](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/opinion/how-many-slaves-work-for-you.html)
* The Limitations of Historical Films: [“Learning History at the Movies”](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/29/learning-history-at-the-movies/)